

(Washington, D.C.) – Today, a bipartisan coalition of members of the House of Representatives announced that the Fair Elections Now Act, legislation to take the hunt for big money and influence of special interests out of elections, was approved by the Committee on House Administration. With more than 160 co-sponsors, including U.S. Rep. Rush Holt (NJ-12), this is the furthest that legislation of this type has ever gotten in Congress.

The Fair Elections Now Act would put elections back in the hands of ordinary Americans by replacing big donor, special interest funded elections with Fair Elections — supported by small dollar local contributions and a match from the Fair Elections fund. With Fair Elections, candidates can focus on their constituents instead of lobbyists; and issues — instead of fundraising.

“The Citizens United decision was a stark wake-up call for those who worry about their voices being drowned out by special interests. This legislation is one response to ensure that all Americans – not the special few – have an equal voice in our elections. The Fair Elections Now Act would take the influence of big money out of our campaign finance system by offering candidates the choice of accessing public funds. This legislation alone would not blunt the damage caused by the misguided Supreme Court decision, but it would help restore fairness to our elections,” Holt said.

Congressman John B. Larson (D-CT), Chairman of the House Democratic Caucus and the author of the legislation said, “this day has been years in the making and is thanks to the hard work of many Americans who believe that real people, not special interests, should have the loudest voice in our political system. No one in Washington wants to spend their time raising money. We all came here to do the work and solve the problems that of our constituents. This legislation would allow us to get back to the real business of the American people. I am thrilled that the Fair Elections Now Act has moved one step closer to reality. I will continue to work to bring it to the floor of the House for a vote.”

“The average citizen needs to have a voice,” Congressman Walter Jones (R-NC), the lead Republicans on the bill, said. “To ensure this, Congress needs to debate legislation like the Fair Elections Now Act. It’s time to return government to the people.”

“A number of landmark ethics, accountability and transparency reforms have been implemented since the Democrats took control of Congress, but I believe we must go further and improve on the progress we have made. We must address the far too great of a role special interests play in our elections. The Fair Elections Now Act adopts many of the same concepts included in legislation – the Clean Money, Clean Elections Act – I have introduced throughout my time in

Congress. I am pleased that the Fair Elections Now Act is advancing in the House, and I look forward to continuing my work with Congressman Larson to include the best aspects of both of our bills so that we finally achieve our shared goal of comprehensive campaign finance reform," said Congressman John F. Tierney (D-MA), a leader in the fight to clean up our election system.

"Today's crucial Committee passage of the Fair Elections Now Act is great news for the future of our democracy," said Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-NY). "I have long supported public financing as one of the best mechanisms we have for reducing the dangerous and corrupting influence of money in our electoral process. We cannot attest to the honesty and efficacy of our political process as long as private interests continue to dominate."

"Running for Congress can be prohibitively expensive, putting it out of reach of many worthy candidates, and this bill levels the playing field by giving qualified candidates access to funding. With committee passage of the Fair Elections Now Act, we are also one step closer to reducing the influence that money is all too often perceived to have in politics and restoring voter confidence in our institution," said Congressman Mike Capuano (D-MA).

"The Fair Elections Now Act is about helping the American people regain control of the political process," said Congresswoman Donna Edwards (D-MD). "In the aftermath of the disastrous Citizens' United decision that overturned decades of legal precedent by now allowing corporations unfettered spending in our political campaigns, the need for this legislation is even more critical. The Fair Elections Now Act strikes a balance between public financing and public oversight, giving the voice to the American people, not large corporations. Passing this bill out of the House Administration Committee is a significant and important step, and I look forward to this legislation coming to the House Floor for a vote."

"I have seen firsthand how a clean elections system has worked well in Maine, leveling the playing field and allowing more people to get involved in running for office. I'm excited about the prospect of bringing a similar system to the national level," said Congresswoman Chellie Pingree, (D-ME).

Congressman Jared Polis (D-CO) said, "Today's markup is a critical step to ensure that people--not special interests--decide our elections, and to help restore public confidence in the election process. This reform legislation represents the best long-term solution to address the influence of big money in Washington that continues to fuel Americans' ever-growing cynicism about the political process."

“This bill puts the people back in charge,” said Rep. Martin Heinrich (D-NM). “Fair elections mean public officials work for their constituents—not the special interest groups.”

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